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Ethnic and Gender Identity in Hip-Hop Among Three Female Emcees in the Netherlands

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ETHNIC AND GENDER IDENTITY IN HIP HOP AMONG THREE FEMALE EMCEES IN THE NETHERLANDS



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Spring 2006

Key Words: Ethnicity, Identity, Women, Body Image, Language

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ABSTRACT

This field study project examines how female rappers in the Netherlands transgress notions of what it means to be Dutch and what it means to be female. Based on interviews with three female rappers, as well as academics and participants in the hip hop scene, the author explores the significance of self-identification within the current political and social context of the Netherlands. Beginning with a history of hip hop, an analysis of globalization and the Dutch hip hop scene, and a review of relevant current events, a firm foundation is established on which issues of identity, ethnicity, and gender in the Dutch hip hop scene can be addressed.

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I. FORWARD

Why hip hop?

Many works have expressed the globalization of hip hop as part of what sociologist George Ritzer calls, “a gradual ‘McDonaldization’ of the world” (Bennett 180). However, there are a growing number of hip hop theorists who consider hip hop cultures in other parts of the world to be both globalized and localized entities, with separate, parallel, and intertwined histories, motivations and participants. This is the stance that I have taken in conducting my study of Dutch hip hop and the ethnic and gender identities of female rappers in the Netherlands.

To view hip hop culture in the Netherlands, one must first understand that hip hop is not merely a commercial product, and among hip hoppers, it is not viewed as merely a musical genre. To do this requires reviewing the history of hip hop in order to understand its cultural significance and impact in the United States, and thus the influence and role it might play in other countries.

There are many topics that I was either unable to touch upon, or touched barely upon, including Eurocentrism, the role of mass media in formulating “imagined communities” (Horboken 207), internet identities and communities, and social class in a Dutch context. In addition, in examining ethnicity in the Netherlands I focused my research almost exclusively on issues effecting people of Moroccan descent. These issues are particularly salient in Dutch society today. They are focused upon heavily by Dutch media and identified as immediate priorities by Dutch policymakers and organizations. However, in focusing on this, I left out much analysis of groups descending from other countries, including Indonesia, Germany, Turkey and Surinam, each of which comprise a

greater part of the population than those of Moroccan descent. According to the Dutch Census Bureau, there are other groups, as well that comprise a part of the 3.1 million people of foreign descent living in the Netherlands. However, it is also important to note that the recent focus on Moroccans in the Netherlands by Dutch policymakers, organizations and media is particularly worth analyzing right now because such focus has much discursive power. Dutch people are becoming more aware of issues of racism as they simultaneously continue to create and perpetuate prejudice and stereotypes of those of Moroccan descent. To be of Moroccan descent in the Netherlands has immediate significance in Dutch society right now. To claim a Moroccan identity, because it is so identified by the dominant society, means standing out. As you will read further on, standing out is not considered “the Dutch way.”

II. INTRODUCTION

A brief history of hip hop

A brief history of hip hop is crucial to an understanding of the genre, and why so many theorists claim rap music as a mode of cultural expression and identity formation for young people all over the world. It's also important, as Tricia Rose puts it, because "examining how musical forms are shaped by social forces...brings into focus how significantly technology and economics contribute to the development of cultural forms" (23).

"Rap music is a form of rhymed storytelling accompanied by highly rhythmic, electronically based music" (Rose 2). Rap is a part of hip hop – including also graffiti and break dancing – which Rose defines as "an African-American and Afro-Caribbean youth culture," that began in the mid-1970s in the South Bronx in New York City. "From the outset, rap music has articulated the pleasures and problems of black urban life in contemporary America" (2). The creation of hip hop culture was intertwined with the socio-economic conditions of the time. Between 1978 and 1986, the U.S. went through significant changes. While the top twenty percent of the population accrued a significantly greater amount of wealth, the bottom twenty percent experienced a significant decline in income (28).

Locally, in the South Bronx, New York's growth as an economic hub, rising property values, the building of new developments, and the relocation of many poor neighborhoods, created a severe lack of affordable housing and a decline in quality of living for poor residents. Meanwhile, these poor residents were comprised mostly of Hispanic and Black households. 30 percent of Hispanic households and 25 percent of

Black households at this time were living at or below the poverty line (Rose 28). Hip hop culture arose out of this atmosphere of powerlessness. Graffiti created a physical presence that was permanent, break dancing was a visual culture that allowed the assertion of one's own skills and the physical imposition of one's own body, and rap music was a verbal, low-budget, accessible forum for frustrations, stories about daily life, and articulations of pleasure. Where there was economic powerlessness, invisibility in the dominant society, discrimination and segregation, hip hop allowed people to assert their voices and a sense of identity, when their identities were being ignored.

Rose states, "Rap music brings together a tangle of some of the most complex social, cultural, and political issues in contemporary American society... For the most part, rappers continue to craft stories that represent the creative fantasies, perspectives, and experiences of racial marginality in America" (3). According to writer Mary-Agnes Beau, "Lots of people think rappers are very self-centred, proud and arrogant. It is the historical and social original purpose of rap, to use words to impose oneself in the social community." Beau adds that the aggressive attitude in hip hop culture comes from the need "for a certain social and age group to express its reality and get recognized in society." Competition between and among hip hoppers, whether through rapping ("freestyling") or break dancing, allows for this recognition.

Rose writes that rap's first commercial release was the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight," released in 1979 (3). In the early 80s, writes Beau, hip hop made its first move to Europe upon the shores of Britain. In fall 1982, writes Steve Cannon, hip hop arrived for the first time in France, with a hip hop tour financed by radio station Europe 1. The tour featured graffiti, break dancing, and the music of Africa Bambaata,

long heralded as one of hip hop's originators (192). As export of U.S. rappers increased, the specialized genre of rap music was solidified in the markets of many European countries, and locally, young people began to create their own hip hop scenes. It wasn't until 1995, however, when Dutch rapper Extince achieved top 10 status on the music charts and Dutch hip hop crew Osdorpe Posse won the Conamus pop prize, that Dutch-language hip hop began to gain popularity (Beau). Now in addition to American rap music, much of the rap music that is consumed by Dutch people is by Dutch-language rap artists, and in the underground hip hop scene, rapping in Dutch is heavily favored and considered more "authentic."

"Glocalized": Hip hop in Holland and the role of ethnicity

There have been a limited number of studies done on hip hop in Holland, and the studies that do exist are written in Dutch. However, there are a number of studies focused on the growth of hip hop in Europe. Specifically Andy Bennett's work, focusing on the evolution of hip hop in two European cities, one in Frankfurt am Main, Germany and the other in Newcastle upon Tyne, England, illustrates how two communities with vastly different socio-historical characteristics have created hip hop scenes that "engage with their local circumstances" (180). He describes a process by which hip hop, as "culturally mobile," is appropriated locally, and notions of authenticity are (re)created in accordance with their local context (177). Bennett uses Robertson's concept of "glocality" to explain the spread of hip hop from the U.S. and the development of hip hop scenes in other countries:

The commercial packaging of hip hop as a global commodity has facilitated its easy access by young people in many different parts of the world. Moreover, such appropriations have in each case involved a reworking of hip hop in ways that engage

with local circumstances. In every respect then, hip hop is both a global and a local form...The crossing of such tendencies is best considered in terms of a process of *glocalization* (Bennett 180).

This idea of “glocalization” is crucial to understanding hip hop in the Netherlands, because local characteristics have helped to create a hip hop scene that is specific to the country.

“They all say that hip hop isn’t something you talk about, it’s something you live,” says hip hop journalist, Myrthe Wilkens. As additional interviews validated, hip hoppers in the Netherlands consider hip hop not just a kind of music, but a style, an attitude, and a way of experiencing life. Though many participants who I interviewed in the Dutch hip hop scene seemed unaware of the socio-cultural history behind hip hop music in America, as well as the African-American legacy of diaspora that continues to pervade American society today, they are aware of the fact the identifying with hip hop culture means identifying with a way of life. Their idea of hip hop authenticity is not based then, as historically in America it would, on a particular skin color or class affiliation. Thus the underground hip hop scene in Holland is full of White Dutch people who do not consider hip hop as “belonging” to ethnic minorities, but who do describe the underground hip hop scene as “multicultural.”

Bennett also writes of the notion of hip hop identity, in a culture where its participants, such as in Newcastle, are mostly white working-class youth. “Indeed, one could go as far as to argue that for this particular group of hip hoppers, their staunchly adhered-to hip hop identity has become a form of external faith, the latter being reconfirmed each time the group was subject to abuse by ‘non-believers’” (193). In Holland, a small country, where a market has grown for Dutch-language hip hop that is commercial, the underground hip hop scene respects hip hop artists who do not “sell out,”

who maintain a level of respect by participating within the scene, thus rejecting the commercialism that is currently growing in Holland, and in a larger respect, that many associate with America.

Bennett writes that it has become evident that it is not only young people who identify with the “African-diaspora” that find hip hop appealing, however the symbolism and imagery of this materialization is still there. “In this way, argues Gilroy, ‘black’ culture becomes a global culture, its styles, musics, and images crossing with a range of different national and regional sensibilities throughout the world and initiating a plurality of responses” (179).

This idea of “Black” culture is applied in Holland to ethnic minority groups. Unless focused on a specific issue that is connected with a certain minority group, such as crime among Moroccan boys, oftentimes minorities are considered simply “Black.” Furthermore, many people recognize the particular connection this group has, as ethnic minorities in the particular context of hip hop, with Black American culture:

In the last five to ten years, there is this new name we all of a sudden use. It is ‘urban.’ Here they use the term urban to describe a scene that doesn’t fit in one corner. It’s R&B, it’s Moroccan music, it’s dancehall, it’s reggae, it’s hip hop. And they just call that urban...Minorities in Holland—whether they are from Morocco or Turkey, or Aruba, St. Maarten, the Caribbean—have this common interest called ‘black music.’ So when you’re studying youth culture, you are also researching minority problems, problems that have to do with integration (Hilkens).

Aside from ‘Black,’ there are other terms used to describe ethnic minorities in Holland. One such word is “allochthon,” which means “‘of foreign descent’ and implicitly refers to mainly Moroccan and Turkish migrants and their offspring. Second and third generation migrants, although often naturalized, are still labeled ‘allochthonous’” (Roggeband). In addition, a word exists that is defined as the opposite of allochthon –

“autochthon” – which refers to those considered to be “Dutch.” The use of these words has escalated lately in face of evidence that allochthon – due mainly to notions of Islam as repressive, and the connection of this to a number of current events – are not assimilated enough into Dutch society. Thus, while the division between allochthon and autochthon grows larger, constructed and perpetuated through Dutch media and policies, the view of integration as an immediate necessity grows, as well. What occurs then is the production of racism and simultaneously the denial of it. Additionally, those who are labeled in this way continually go back and forth between wanting to distinguish themselves as different, identifying themselves as having power over the label, and wanting to blend in, considering themselves just Dutch, or normal. This is especially significant to note in a society which uses the phrase “Doe maar gewoon, dan doe je al gek genoeg!” (or, “Be but normal, then you are already crazy enough!”) as a cultural motto.

Many people whom I interviewed for this study used this phrase to explain the Dutch cultural context for a variety of issues, such as Senna Gourdou, a Moroccan-Dutch singer, who talks about being “boxed” by mainstream society, particularly journalists, as a “Good Moroccan”:

Here in Holland it’s all about boxing. We have this attitude that you just try—well, it’s a phrase, I’ll try to translate it: ‘Just be normal, then you’ll be crazy enough.’ So when you are kind of special, they always try to shush you down. The whole boxing idea really fits into that. They lay down a few boxes and then you fit into one of those. If you think outside of the box or you do stuff outside of the box, it’s like, ‘Oh, don’t think you’re that special.’ Just be normal, then you’ll be crazy enough. It doesn’t bother me, it’s just part of doing what I do and being what I am.

Although Senna, as a person who identifies as Dutch, feels encouraged not to stand out, she automatically appears distinctive because she is identified by others as Moroccan, an identity that carries different meanings than are considered to be Dutch.

Other elements specific to the Netherlands have also helped to shape the hip hop scene. First is the size of the country. The Netherlands is small and very densely populated, leading to beliefs of immigrants as “crowding the country.” Secondly, the switch from the guilder to the euro in 2002 caused an inflation of costs without an increase in income. This recession has been used as a tool by some politicians in spurring anti-immigrant sentiments in the Netherlands.

Beau also writes, “In Europe the movement developed in differentiating from American rap, according to the different social and immigration contexts and the local dominating musical scene.” Though this is an oversimplification, in face of international politics and changing times, in many parts of Europe, America has come to be seen as both a threat and a symbol. Part of the local cultural changes within different European countries have been attributed in some circles to American influence and globalization. A rejection of these changes, as well as a sense of pride and identity in one’s own culture are trends in European hip hop. Outside of the hip hop scene, it is not dissimilar to the parallel process that many Dutch people are also undergoing in their daily lives – in face of growing immigration and social issues, Dutch people are looking to redefine and assert a national identity, a sense of what it means to be Dutch.

In his description of the localized hip hop scene in Frankfurt, Bennett writes of the importance of language in “informing the cultural sensibilities that become inscribed within conventions of musical taste” (182). His description of German artists switching from English to German rap is similar to what has occurred in Holland. “In switching over from English to German-language rapping, it could be argued, a new measure of accuracy was made possible between localized social experience and linguistic

representation” (182). In other words, identity grounded through local context is better communicated through the local language. In the case of the Netherlands, Dutch hip hop has become a way to articulate a sense of national (but also local) identity, which is inherently through its use of an exclusive language in a music market and country inundated with the English language, oppositional to the United States. Even within the Netherlands, there are differences in the pronouncements of speech between rappers from South Holland, Central Holland, and North Holland. Rapper Lady Di states, “I was about 14 years old [when I first became interested in rapping]. There was a Dutch rapper, Extince, he is also from Den Bosch, the South... We talk differently than people from Amsterdam. And I heard that and I thought it was cool.”

What has formed is a hip hop scene specifically for Dutch people that represents Dutch people, and a hip hop scene that in typical hip hop fashion, exerts its pride through performance. Although there are more male than female performers and listeners, women also identify with these male rappers on a number of different levels, including, in this instance, their sense of Dutchness. However, a “Dutch” identity, like any identity, is also a contested identity within the Netherlands, and under constant debate.

Ethnic minorities and identification through hip hop

Ali B. and Raymzter¹ are both popular Moroccan-Dutch rappers, and have both been the subjects of fervent attention by media and popular music consumers. Many interviewees brought up Ali B., using his blossoming career to illustrate how current social issues in the Netherlands have influenced his popularity and perhaps defined his career as a hip hop artist. Below are quotes from these interviews about Ali B. and

¹ See Appendix D.

Raymzter. The last quote is an excerpt from an article, one of the many written about Raymzter after he released his controversial first single.

I think [Ali B.'s popularity] has to do with one very important thing: how we developed politically in the last five years. We were really in need of a Moroccan boy who did well. Because Islamic people here were the bad guys. I think Ali B. just came at the right moment. Because he's not really a very talented rapper, he's a funny guy...But all of a sudden we have this guy who makes very clean hip hop. He doesn't curse a lot, he doesn't really talk about hoes and bitches, he's very polite, he shows up in practically every TV show we have, he gives his name to several nongovernmental institutions. He profiles himself as this nice, lovely boy who has some street edges, but that's it. So it's very easy to like him. But in the underground hip hop scene, he has no credibility at all. [He and the Queen] even did the handshake. I mean if the Queen is willing to do that with somebody he must be a loving person! (Hilkens)

Everyone knows who Ali B. is. He hugged the Queen! I don't know why. He just stayed himself, you know? ...I think it's very good for Ali B. to be out there...He shows people in a way that, 'Hey, I'm just like you! You know, maybe I'm Muslim, but I'm just a normal person!' And I think Dutch people like that a little bit (Hendriks).

I just try my best not to get a label that will haunt me for the rest of my career...I know this rapper, Raymzter, and he had this problem...He chose to put out a song called "Kutmarokkanen??" ["Fuckin' Moroccans"]. He made a lot of noise with it. He said it because one politician used the phrase one time. That's why he chose to incorporate it in his rap and his song. He got really, really famous with it. People started calling him to debate on programs on TV. People labeled him as Raymzter, the Moroccan rapper, not Raymzter, the rapper. So when the whole issue was over, he was nowhere, he was lost. I think that's a shame. So career-wise, I try to be bothered by it so I can stay focused. Not a personal thing. I like being Moroccan...It's not something I would hide (Gourdou).

K__ Marokkanen [is] a biting commentary on white Dutch attitudes toward young Moroccans following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks (sample lyric: "They look at me as if I flew into the Twin Towers"). The song reached No. 4 in the Dutch pop charts despite, or perhaps because of, being banned by some stations due to its racially and politically charged message. "So what?" says Raymzter. "It made people think about the way they stereotype ethnic minorities, and that was the point"...Raymzter's message is all the more pointed because it comes at a time when the Netherlands' traditional tolerance is being tested by frustration over the sharp rise in petty crime attributed to young, urban Moroccans and a general anti-Muslim feeling since Sept. 11. The result is the growing stigmatizing of a whole generation of Dutch-born Moroccans (Daruvalla).

Ali B., who has achieved massive popularity additionally among White Dutch youth, is not respected in the underground hip hop scene. This is due to a number of reasons, including the most important fact that Ali B. is simply not a participant in the community. But his rejection also implies that underground hip hoppers have an awareness of ethnicity and how it plays out in Dutch society. Ali B., who emphasizes his

Moroccan identity in a way that is seen as accessible and harmless to the Dutch public, is not as acceptable as underground hip hoppers who are of Moroccan descent, who tend to emphasize within the mainstream context that their ethnicity is just one part of their identity, and that they are first and foremost, Dutch. For example, even after Raymzter released his explicitly political song, he was still able to maintain respect in the underground hip hop scene. Because his song criticized politicians and the mainstream Dutch public for their racism, underground hip hoppers agreed and supported his message without feeling excluded as not Moroccan. Moroccan-Dutch rappers such as Raymzter coexist among other rappers in the “multicultural” underground hip hop scene and are not seen as outsiders.

In her study “Rap and rage: cultural politics of Moroccan youth in the Netherlands,” Miriam Gazzah writes about how second-generation Moroccan-Dutch youth identify themselves through different musical genres, including through listening to hip hop artists such as Ali B. and a kind of popular Moroccan folk music called “shaabi” (4). This allows them to simultaneously express different, sometimes contradictory parts of their identity. What is special about Moroccan-Dutch rap is that it has created a following of other Moroccan-Dutch youth outside of the underground hip hop scene that is very heavily based on cross-identification with issues and themes that seem exclusively rapped by Moroccan-Dutch rappers. Some of these issues include racism, Dutch politics, the war in Iraq, and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict (13).

In Frankfurt, writes Bennett, informed by local historical issues, ethnic minorities who are participants in the hip hop scene rap in response to the fear and anger many experience when their sense of German identity is constantly challenged by the dominant

society. These racial issues are further exacerbated by stereotypes and prejudice against immigrants and therefore those who, by the color of their skin, might appear “foreign.” Many are called “Asylant” or “Asybewerber” which is meant to describe a person seeking political asylum, but which holds, in German society, much of the same negative connotations as “allochthon.” Such circumstances explain the anger and frustrations expressed in their songs (Bennett 183).

In our interview, Gazzah stated that there is a growing population of separate groups of male Moroccan-Dutch rappers who release tracks that are “low-budget,” “amateur,” and “not of a good quality.” They are particularly political in their identification as Moroccan. They rap about many topics, in addition to those mentioned above, and in particular express a strong identification with Islamic culture, as well as a disdain for President Bush, anti-Muslim politicians Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Pim Fortuyn, Prime Minister of Israel Ariel Sharon, and Jewish people in general. Gazzah explains this as a phenomenon that has grown out of a lack of voice given to Muslim-identified youth:

Since September 11, 2001, the political debate on the position of Muslims in the Netherlands has taken a more hostile direction. In addition, the media usually do not offer a platform to Dutch Muslims in order to contribute to this debate. As a result, the debate on Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands takes place ‘over the heads of the Muslims’, with very limited input and involvement of the people in question (Gazzah 15).

Gazzah writes that the political and subversive content of these songs could be seen as a response by these rappers to a continuous lack of voice in mainstream Dutch media.

III. FRAMEWORK

I have used two main theories, poststructuralism and postcolonialism, to construct my argument for how three female rappers in the Netherlands transgress notions of what it means to be Dutch and female. My use of poststructuralist theory is based on Foucault's notion of ethnicity and gender as "constructed historically through discursive practice." (Malesevic 145). My use of postcolonial theory is based on Homi Bhabha's concept of the "ethnic self" as only existing in relation to an "ethnic Other." Sinisa Malesevic writes, "Post-colonial immigration, the arrival of refugees, and greater mobility of individuals have exposed the myth of cultural homogeneity and undermined the traditional narratives of uniform ethno-national culture" (147).

I have also used a definition and description of the concept of ethnicity by Malesevic that is based on the work of sociologist Frederik Barth:

He defined and explained ethnicity from the outside in: it is not the 'possession' of cultural characteristics that makes social groups distinct but rather it is the social interaction with other groups that makes that difference possible, visible and socially meaningful...Cultural difference *per se* does not create ethnic collectivities, it is the social contact with others that leads to definition and categorization of an 'us' and 'them' (3).

A concept that falls under the poststructuralist and postcolonialist idea of ethnicity is George Simmel's theory of "symbolic interactionism." Symbolic interactionism involves the "perception of ethnic relations as a particular form of individual and group interaction, which is always encumbered with ambiguities and dependent on the changing dynamics of interactionism" (61). Malesevic describes interactionism as a focus on "agency over structure," which places "values over material interests and political motives in the everyday life of ethnic groups" (61).

In addition to individual agency, interactionists also look at the construction of “ethnic group reality.” Herbert Blumer defines the function of prejudice as a way “to maintain the hegemonic position of the dominant group by preserving the status quo in their relations” (68). Malesevic writes that the strength of group prejudice is derived from socialization and those with political power. “[They] aim to maintain the [status quo] in order to preserve their privileged position, but they are also able to rearticulate a sense of group position when necessary in order to decrease ethnic tensions.” The problem with this is that it overlooks the already established beliefs and prejudice of the dominant ethnic group of the other. Such is the case with Dutch integration plans, which are instituted at the same time as discriminatory policies, such as the denial of Dutch passports to Dutch-born children of foreign parents. Writes Malesevic, “When categorization is undertaken by the authority which is considered to be legitimate (e.g. the State, a group recognized as superior, and so on) it might foster ethnic group consciousness” (71). Such policies deny many Dutch-born people the ability to identify fully as Dutch, essentializing the idea of such people as “different” and emphasizing the importance of their integration into the rest of society. All of this is communicated in many ways to the dominant group, who become aware of the Other.

These theories have also been applied to the concept of gender, as gender is also a discursive, historical process that changes and evolves over time (Green 41). One example is that of the feminist movement in the United States, which helped to recreate notions of a woman’s role (read: mostly, White, middle class women) in society. However, despite the existence of societies that recognize genders other than male and female, the United States and the Netherlands continue to enforce the gender binary, the

idea that gender (i.e. socialized female or male behaviors) is biological and based on one of two sexes. Evidence of women expressing their female identity in different ways, that vary in accordance with their class, cultural background or simply their nature, is not perceived as an alternate gender expression due to the enforcement of a two-gender, biologically-based system (41).

IV. ASSUMPTIONS

My original intent in undergoing this project had a lot to do with my previous hip hop education, as well as a very Afro-centric, American view of racial issues. I expected to find a hip hop culture based on ethnic identification and authenticity, assertions of identity and racial tensions. As it turns out, I was expecting another America.

My original question—How are female hip hop artists, specifically ethnic minorities, in the Netherlands, through hip hop, producing alternative racial and gender identities?—was based on my knowledge of identity politics in the U.S., a system that is not widespread here.

As I underwent my research, I began to recognize that my original assumptions about globalization and hip hop were incorrect. I had assumed that in addition to hip hop translating into Dutch culture that the racial politics would translate as well. I also did not recognize initially the specificity of “Nederhop,” and its cultural significance in helping to explain social issues in the Netherlands. Hip hop in Holland—or “Nederhop”—is a culture separate from that of the United States, and I had a lot to learn. I found increasingly also that many people weren’t so impressed with my knowledge of hip hop in the United States, which is what I thought would legitimate me as a researcher of Dutch hip hop. Here, as in the United States, the hip hoppers who I interviewed viewed hip hop as a self-sustainable culture, and didn’t seem to feel like they needed to understand U.S. hip hop culture in order to find value in their own.

In addition, I am an outsider in many ways. My own interest in lyricism and performance (as opposed to the more local, community-oriented aspects of hip hop such as graffiti-art, break dancing and scratching/DJing), comes originally from my stance

growing up as an upper middle class suburbanite – the group in the United States that consumes, commercially, the most hip hop. My relationship to hip hop music is very different from someone who grew up within the culture, and very different from someone who produces it. My class and racial identification in this case are inextricably linked to my identity as a consumer, and therefore as an outsider to hip hop culture.

V. METHODOLOGY

I used various methods to collect my data. I found Dutch hip hop and music websites and searched for events. I read newspaper and magazine articles on hip hop artists and I contacted publicity organizations and journalists. I attended as many shows as I could and downloaded free music from artists' websites. Before I conducted any interviews with female rappers, I had a number of interviews with others that I felt would help me to prepare culturally appropriate interview questions. Most of my interviews were participant-led discussions, based around my interview questions. I chose to word many questions differently depending on with whom I was speaking.

My first interview was with Wijnand Hollander, Director of the Marmoucha Foundation, a government-subsidized group with the purpose of promoting Moroccan music and culture. The interview gave me a greater idea of integration policies and multiculturalism within the Netherlands. My second interview was with Miriam Gazzah, whose Ph.D. research on Moroccan-Dutch youth culture and Maroc-hop is unprecedented in the Netherlands. My third interview was scheduled with Ruth van der Tuuk of an underground Dutch hip hop website, NLhiphop.nl. The day before our interview she asked if she could bring her boyfriend, and I accepted, not knowing that Harry Ruhe is a Dutch rapper named MC Paradize, of the group Hadrie. They provided me with an extensive list of names and contacts, even some phone numbers, and through them I was able to get in touch with Myrthe Hilkens, a hip hop journalist with great knowledge about the hip hop scene, sexism, and larger social issues. Though by this time I had contacted and compiled a list of about ten Dutch female rappers, I was only able to meet with two. Senna Gourdou contacted me after I got in touch with her friend/manager, Brian Elstak of

the online magazine, *mixin.nl*. We met twice. After getting in touch with her manager from the artist management company SPEC (Stimulating People Evolving Culture), I scheduled an interview with Lady Di. And finally, after some time had passed, the Rotterdam rapper Jav'lin, temporarily based in Texas, emailed me back with typed answers to my interview questions.

Another way that I was able to get a sense of the Dutch hip hop scene and culture in such a short amount of time was through the internet. By watching digitized videos of online performances, as well as video clips, I exposed myself to a whole world of Dutch rap. In addition, online forums which are heavily frequented by Dutch hip hop fans, allowed me to gather observations and opinions from participants themselves, without revealing myself as an outsider. After posting a short survey on hip hop on a popular hip hop website, *hiphopinjesmoel.com*², I was able to use many of the answers to further my understanding of Dutch hip hop culture.

The use of internet in these instances was valuable for my research, but it is also important to note its outward significance. In the past few years, the rising popularity of the internet, as well as the accessibility of materials that can be found online, has connected hip hop communities all over the world. This is just another development that disproves ideas of cultures as monolithic or as victim to globalization. Users based as far away as Indonesia, Iran, as well as users based in the Netherlands appeared as participants in these Dutch online forums.

My final project consists of a structured paper outlining the significance of hip hop as a way of analyzing issues of ethnicity and gender, the role of globalization, and the importance of female rappers in the particular social context of the Netherlands. I

² See Appendix C.

hope that the end result may be seen as a show of support for female rappers, as well as an educational tool that provides an understanding of contemporary Dutch social and political issues that may help to further positive social change.

VI. RESULTS

The Rappers

Senna Gourdou is 24 and currently lives in Amsterdam. In addition to performing, she has a day job working at a clothing store in Dam Square. She was born in Haarlem and grew up in Almere. Her parents are both Moroccan, though her father died when she was seven of a heart attack. She was raised by her mother and her aunt, who moved to the Netherlands after Senna's father passed away.

In this society you have a lot of friction between Moroccan people and Dutch people because they say that 'the Moroccans are always thinking about going back, and they are just staying here to make money, and they don't even want to learn the language' and stuff like that. My mother is really different from that because she has worked here all her life.

Though Senna is now strictly a singer, she was "brought up" in the hip hop community from the age of 14, when she was taken under the wing of a popular local hip hop group and given the chance to perform on stage. Through this band and her participation in the hip hop scene, she met a number of other future hip hop collaborators, including her current boyfriend, Pete Philly. It wasn't until age 17, she says, that she considered dropping rap for singing, because of her competition – another Moroccan-Dutch rapper named Senna – and because she wanted to distinguish herself as a performer.

Now Senna is a singer with very tight roots in the hip hop community. I have included her under the rapper label because she considers herself a member of the hip hop community, and is an important part of the scene. She collaborates with many Dutch rappers and frequently performs with Pete Philly and Perquisite (a duet between her and Pete Philly called "Mellow" was released as a single and video clip this past year),

though she sings only in English. She also recently performed in the Incarnation tour, the album release tour of Moroccan-Dutch singer Rajae El Muhandiz, sponsored by the Marmoucha Foundation. Another Moroccan-Dutch female rapper, Bad Brya, participated, as well.

In our interview, Senna was insistent on distancing herself from the “Moroccan singer” label:

I remember when [Rajae and I] were talking about this show, when she invited me to support her in it, together with Bad Brya, the whole idea was to put it out as a Moroccan power girl thing. And I’m not really into that. I was just like ‘I don’t want to be a part of it.’ I can be myself just performing as an artist/singer and not as a Moroccan girl. And Bad Brya is I think like me. She’s all about real hip hop and ‘I’m a hip hopper, I’m a rapper and just forget about the whole Moroccan thing.’

Dijana Hendriks, also known as “Lady Di,” is 24 and currently lives in Almere. She is originally from Den Bosch in the South of the Netherlands. Her father is from the Netherlands and her mother is from Yugoslavia. She has quit her former day job as a customer service representative to devote all of her time to rapping. Her father was a disc jockey for a radio station, which is how she maintained a connection to music and got her first taste of hip hop. She says that the rapper Extince, also from Den Bosch, inspired her to rap on her own, in private.

Lady Di has never been a part of the underground hip hop scene. In fact, she never had aspirations of becoming a professional rapper until she was signed a year and a half ago to the artist management company SPEC (Stimulating People Evolving Culture), the same group that manages Ali B. After attempting many times to sneak into his dressing room, including by climbing a fence, she

finally convinced a security guard to let her “spit.” After she performed a “brag and boast” rap for Ali B. she was offered a spot with SPEC.

She just finished touring with Ali B. in his traveling rap/musical/comedy show and is currently recording her first album. Her first single – “Het Lot” – was recently released, and features two other SPEC performers. Lady Di raps strictly in Dutch. Though she enjoys touring with Ali B., she says that she is really excited to get her own show soon.

Tasha Narez-Foster, also known as “Jav’lin,” is 20 and from Rotterdam. She grew up with her parents, grandparents and her twin sister. Her mother is Dutch and her father is Spanish. She makes a living through rapping, stating that she “can’t keep a real job for more than two weeks.” She first experienced hip hop through music videos on TV at age 14. Shortly thereafter she began writing her own raps, and at age 16 she dropped out of high school to pursue music. “My father and I never had a very good bond and my dropping out of school didn’t really help either.” At age 17 Jav’lin got pregnant and had an abortion, which she writes about in her song, “Up Against the Wall.” She says that at the time she really bonded to hip hop “because it was not judgmental at all and in a way it listened to me.”

She is currently temporarily based in Texas where she frequently performs and runs a nonprofit organization against the death penalty. Jav’lin says that her organization visits death row inmates “to let them know they are not forgotten,” organizes events to raise money to help inmates with their cases and tries to

spread messages through her music. One of example is the song, “Walk with me,” which criticizes the U.S. justice and prison system.

Though Jav’lin is aware of the history of hip hop as coming “from minorities,” and herself uses hip hop music as a medium for cultural activism, she believes that it has evolved into a broader culture. “Over the years Hip Hop became this big, seeing-everyone-with-the-same-respect type of medium. It doesn’t have anything to do with race, religion, gender, class or culture. I think Hip Hop itself actually is the culture for a lot of us.”

VII. DISCUSSION

[It is] very difficult to talk about hip hop as though it's a general thing. Maybe black people and black women in the U.S. are fighting a battle that we don't have to fight. The main problem is that although we are not fighting the same battle, the influence of the way they are communicating the battle is here. It is here and it's huge. Although we have different issues, here we don't have a notion of [the African American history]. Here we just see tits and ass and we see men spanking it. We don't know what the story is behind that deed. And here you just have stupid copycats who don't have the same story, who just like the image, who like the idea of being a master pimp...Let me put it this way: if it's a battle that Afro-Americans are still fighting, and if it's still about emancipation...⁵⁰ probably has his reasons to do what he does, but I'm not interested anymore. Because they have to think about the images that they spread (Hilkens).

There is very little writing on women and hip hop, much less women and hip hop in the Netherlands. Much of the writing that does exist on female rappers in the Netherlands are journalistic works that align the women together under the solitary title of "femcee." These articles very often illustrate female rappers as special cases of women trying to make it in a man's world. While these associations are not far from the truth, the writers fail to analyze why hip hop is considered a masculine phenomenon and how exactly female rappers are transgressive, if they can be considered transgressive, aside from the mere fact that they are female. This view also essentializes the role of female, when in reality, even among these three performers and in different cultural settings (such as African American female hip hoppers), how the role of female is performed can vary greatly.

Therefore, much of the reading I have completed about hip hop has had to do with female rappers in the United States, a completely different arena with its own history very much tied to class and race, and more specific notions of gender. Many themes, however, can still be applied. In this analysis I will draw upon Tricia Rose's essay "Bad

³ See Appendix D.

Sistas: Black Women Rappers and Sexual Politics in Music,” as a basis for themes relayed to me by Dutch hip hop journalist Myrthe Hilkens, as well as the three female rappers whom I interviewed, Senna, Lady Di and Jav’lin.

Hilkens’ recent writing on the negative influences of hip hop on young people, particularly girls, has created a stir in Dutch media and the hip hop community of which she considers herself a fan and about which she writes so extensively. As you can see from the above quote, Hilkens attributes much of the objectification of women in hip hop to rap artists from the U.S., though is aware of this influence on Dutch rap. Still Hilkens believes that most Dutch hip hop artists are spreading what she believes to be “good” messages. “Dutch hip hop in general is pretty progressive. Most of them are not 50 cent...I mean, you have a few copies, but I think in general, Dutch hip hop is very clean and loving and nice.” Additionally, Beau writes that “gangsta rap,” which she defines as “a violent style of rap discriminating women,” does not exist in Europe, attributed to the fact that there are “less urban ghettos” than in the United States. In general, this is the case. Many popular Dutch rappers, for example, produce rap videos in which they are seen in their own environments. For example, Ali B has rapped about Almere, where he and many other Dutch rappers, including Raymzter, grew up. Pete Philly has featured his current hometown, Amsterdam, in one of his music videos. The Opposites, among other shots in the music video for their party song “Oew Oew,” appeared on a clean city sidewalk rapping in front of a shoarma shop. “Urban ghettos,” such as in the United States, do not exist in the Netherlands. However, rap that objectifies female bodies, that showcases what are usually seen as symbols of masculinity, such as cars, violence, and competition do exist in many rap videos and songs by male Dutch rap artists.

Hilkens believes that such material, as well as more explicit material, such as the rap videos of 50 cent, perpetuate and “cultivate” certain behaviors of both boys and girls. She believes that this type of hip hop can negatively influence children.

I remember when Madonna had the hit, ‘Like a Virgin,’ I was making a mole with my crayon and dancing in front of the mirror wearing a hundred necklaces. I wanted to be her. I think everybody remembers a person who had that kind of influence at one time in their life. Right now, I don’t think hip hop is influencing children in a good way.

In particular, Hilkens has focused on last year’s series of gang rapings of girls by boys aged between 13 and 16 and a number of other news items having to do with the sexuality of adolescents, as evidence that the objectification of women in hip hop is influencing young people negatively (Expatica, 5 May 2004).

And the thing that I am most afraid of is that girls who listen to hip hop are already cultivated. They think it is normal to dress in a certain way and they tolerate certain behavior of boys. Emancipation started only fifty years ago and now we are already tolerating this, because it’s not modern, it’s not hip and trendy to talk about emancipation. I not only do not like the fact that they use women in this way, but I don’t like the fact that women are letting themselves be used (Hilkens).

Despite her belief that hip hop has great influence over young people, Hilkens is adamant about the fact that she does not mean to blame hip hop. She believes that the problems affecting young people are caused and influenced by many factors, including parents, school, the government, and also youth culture. “And since hip hop is so influential, we should also look at our responsibility.” Thus, Hilkens original article on sexism in hip hop appeared first on a popular Dutch hip hop website, Statemagazine.nl, addressed specifically to the hip hop community. It was soon picked up by several Dutch newspapers and taken out of its local context. Hilkens states that her opinion of certain hip hop, particularly explicit rap videos, is not currently a popular one because it appears

to challenge Dutch ideas of freedom and censorship. Much of the response from the hip hop community, to whom she addressed the article, was negative.

It's not popular to think like me right now. Especially in Holland because Holland promotes itself by emphasizing that we have freedom, drugs and prostitutes and that's what we are proud of. But I'm more proud of a Holland in which we tolerate our Muslim neighbor than tolerate sex, because it's an empty freedom. We're not using our freedom in the right way anymore, in my opinion (Hilkens).

In contrast to Hilkens address as a journalist (and therefore to some extent, an observer), to the hip hop community, Rose writes about female rappers in the U.S. and their refusal to publicly criticize male rappers for the sexism displayed in hip hop music. They did so, wrote Rose, "...because they were acutely aware of the dominant discursive context within which their responses would be reproduced" (149). In media, these rappers were constructed as speaking out in opposition to black men, who were constructed as complete sexists. "...These female rappers felt that they were being used as a political baton to beat male rappers over the head, rather than being affirmed as women who could open up public dialogue to interrogate sexism and its effects on young black women" (150).

Senna, for example, does not like to be boxed as a "Good Moroccan," for fear of being posed as in opposition to "Bad Moroccans," indicating her awareness of current political issues that make labeling herself as Moroccan something that could be easily interpreted and judged without her control.

I'm Moroccan but I don't try to stand out as a Moroccan singer because that doesn't define me. Musically, my talent defines me...it's a really hot issue right now, being Moroccan. Are you a good one? Or a bad one? Are you the one who is out every night causing trouble? Or are you the one that stays in school and makes something out of her life? My name is out there a little bit now. I get calls from people inviting me to stuff not because I sing but because I am Moroccan. So I'm like 'okay, I'm cool, I'm down for whatever, I could talk to you guys, but do you want me to sing?' 'No no, just talk.' Then that's it for me, I don't want to be a part of that. Because I'm a singer in the first place, then I'm Dutch, then Moroccan (Gourdou).

She also feels hesitant to emphasize the Moroccan or female part of her identity through her music perhaps because she feels that doing so might separate her from the hip hop community of which she considers herself a part.

Gazzah explains the importance of Dutch-Moroccan hip hop artists in transgressing the Dutch-imposed boundaries of what it means to be “Muslim” and “Moroccan”:

Dutch-Moroccan hip-hoppers exemplify that being a young Moroccan in the Netherlands does not mean being a Muslim and nothing else. Moroccan youths express multiple identities, which are sometimes even contradictory. Dutch society has not (yet) recognized these multiple identities of young Moroccans and it keeps referring to them as Muslims. Yet, the Moroccan community and Moroccan youth in particular, may give priority to very different identities. In fact, the Moroccan community is very diverse and varied. So far, Dutch society has, intentionally or unintentionally, overlooked this nuance (Gazzah 17).

Because she refused to be “boxed” as Moroccan, Senna transgresses the mainstream system of identification and allows for the expression of an identity that is nuanced. Though she may still be perceived by others as Moroccan, by denying such a label, disassociating herself from the stereotype, she transgresses the perceived notions of her group’s nature. As she continues to maneuver within the underground hip hop scene, where she can safely disassociate from the essentialized Moroccan identity, over time, she may help to change those perceptions.

Rose writes about female rappers in the U.S. as writing songs that “cast a new light on male-female sexual power relations and depict women as resistant, aggressive participants” (155). These songs, which challenge women’s complicity in the male-female sexual dichotomy, are particularly important due to the lack of female agency displayed in many depictions of women by male rap artists. While part of the problem is

the way women are depicted, another part of the problem could be seen as simply the fact that female artists with female voices are a minority, thus women are often unable to speak for themselves. Additionally, Senna's display of sexual and physical agency in both her songs and on stage, as a woman of Moroccan-Dutch descent, not only challenges the male-female sexual dichotomy, but challenges essentialized notions of what it means to be female and Moroccan in Dutch society:

The category of 'Dutch' women apparently does not include 'allochthonous' women, even if they are born in the Netherlands or have the Dutch nationality, reinforcing a dichotomy where none of the two opposing groups are clearly defined. The creation of a contrast category of 'Dutch women', denies the Dutchness of women from Turkish and Moroccan descent. (Roggeband 18).

Moroccan women are often depicted in Dutch media as sexually repressed and victims of their culture. Thus Senna's particular style of performance – for example, “street dancing” on stage – challenges this discourse.

At the same time, Jav'lin and Senna's desire not to be boxed as simply female is made irrelevant when they are immediately identified as such by others, particularly by the dominant hip hop community. When performing, many female emcees find that instead of having to prove themselves, crowds automatically offer their attention. Some, like Ruth van der Tuuk of NLhiphop.nl, attribute this to the fact that female rappers are a minority, therefore their performance is considered “fresh.” But others like Senna expand on the idea that due to the hip hop community's desire for more female rappers, their immediate acceptance is a way to welcome them in. Lady Di views this negatively, particularly when male audience members assume that because she is female, she is less developed as a rapper:

I think it's good to be female because you are noticed sooner, but what's bad about it is that they sometimes have prejudice. For example, they think you have less skills than male rappers. Like somebody went up to me a time ago, he was like, 'You were signed by Ali B., congratulations! It's gonna be a success if he writes your lyrics.' I was like, 'What? I write my own lyrics! Why do you think he writes my lyrics just because I am a woman?' ...a lot of artists think you have less skills or whatever just because you're a woman (Hendriks).

Because the hip hop community recognizes the absence of female rappers, their enthusiasm and encouragement may be seen and interpreted negatively by female rappers, who might feel patronized, as well as other members of the hip hop community who might feel resentful of female rappers' supposed immediate acceptance. Asserting and proving oneself within the hip hop sphere is seen as authenticating, and many female rappers are excluded from this process when audience members respond with enthusiasm and sympathy for their status as minorities.

Rose writes of the often assertions by hip hop theorists that rap's emergence was a "reassertion of black manhood" (151). Rose explains that this sort of definition of hip hop is problematic because "...it renders sustained and substantial female pleasure and participation in hip hop invisible or impossible." In particular, Rose critiques Houston Baker's account of hip hop in the 1990s: "...his formulation of male pleasure in rap coupled with the total absence of women at the conceptual level [renders] his analysis incorrect and problematic" (151). At the very least, the presence of female rappers challenges this dominant notion of hip hop as a male sphere. Writes Rose:

The presence of black female rappers and the urban, working-class black hairstyles, clothes, expressions, and subject matter of their rhymes provide young black women with a small culturally reflective public space. Black women rappers affirm black female popular pleasure and public presence by privileging black female subjectivity and black female experiences in the public sphere. Public performance also provides a means by which young black women can occupy public space in ways that affirms the centrality of their voices (182).

Because their voices are considered a minority, female rappers who write about experiences specific to their lives expand the dominant ideas of rap music and dominant notions of what it means to be an authentic rapper. They also bring to the forefront images of women with agency over their own bodies, sexuality, and lives, without constructing themselves as in opposition to male rappers, a stance that would alienate them from the hip hop community. For example, in the song “Up Against the Wall,” Jav’lin writes explicitly of her decision to have an abortion in face of mounting responsibilities, an unresponsive sexual partner, and the depression she felt in her life during that time. She says that the song has spurred moved reactions from the crowd, including many comments from women who feel that they can identify with her message and experience. Many audience members have also commented on the “heavy” content. Such topics as abortion are rare in Dutch hip hop.

Many consider hip hop a sphere where people can express their feelings and experiences. “I think that’s what most rappers do, write about their lives,” says MC Paradize. He states that he doesn’t rap about prejudice because as a White Dutch rapper, he doesn’t feel that it affects him, though he is aware that “when you’re an ethnic minority, it’s more likely for you to rap about racism.” Paradize also finds the “realness” of rap music to be what authenticates rappers. “You got a lot of rappers running around in Holland. It doesn’t matter as long as the message is real.” Part of this process, says Paradize, is through the use of Dutch-language in hip hop, which he feels expands his ability to express himself.

Lady Di also takes this stance. She is the most commercial of the three female performers, and is also unique in that she raps strictly in Dutch: “I am very simple. I think

Dutch, I speak Dutch, so why should I rap in English?” Because she is commercial and never rose out of the underground, Lady Di is viewed much like Ali B. in the underground hip hop community – as inauthentic. She intends to reach the same audience as Ali B., who though popular among many different groups, has become most famous in the pop arena and most popular among young children. Her affiliation and frequent collaboration with Ali B. and many other SPEC performers, such as Soesi B. who is also Moroccan-Dutch, indicates an alliance with Ali B.’s safe, positive, and non-threatening message.

Lady Di’s image certainly appears safe and appropriate for kids. In terms of her image she does little to present anything that strays from dominant notions of the female gender. In music videos and press photos her hair is styled, make-up covers her face, and she wears clothes colored in pastels and pinks. Lady Di’s music also focuses on issues of love and heartbreak. Such an image is accessible to Dutch pop consumers because it is consistent with the messages of other music and media that is intended for a young female audience. At the same time, however, Lady Di employs a kind of rapping called “brag and boast” – what has been considered by many hip hop theorists to be “hyper-masculine.” In addition, released as her first single, “Het Lot,” features a male singer and a male rapper. Simply the ownership of this song, and her status as a performer, gives Lady Di an authority that transgresses traditional notions of female behavior. But the conventionality of her appearance and the subject matter of her songs does little to contribute to this transgression.

Though Senna and Jav’lin are not reaching as wide of an audience within the Netherlands because of their current affiliation with the underground hip hop scene, they

both write songs in English because they desire to reach audiences outside of the country, as well. Jav'lin performs regularly in Texas and is even a member of the internet networking website myspace.com, which has become a haven for musicians trying to spread their music. On her myspace.com profile page she posts full song files, digitized videos of live performances, and biographical information focused on her establishment as a performer and the work of her nonprofit organization. Through materials like these, Senna and Jav'lin are able to reach outside of the Netherlands to identify with a more global, not necessarily commercial, hip hop culture that is not so quick to consider their ethnicities as crucial to their identities as performers. It is partly their intention of reaching outside of the Netherlands that makes Senna and Jav'lin appear to transgress the current political and social bounds of Dutch society, while Lady Di, identifying and identified as Dutch, remains within them.

However, even this idea is contested when Lady Di is mistakenly labeled as Moroccan in Dutch press. This might occur because of her affiliation with Ali B., the appearance of darkly tanned skin in press photos, as well as the association that comes from the U.S. (that would be made by an unknowing journalist unfamiliar with hip hop), between commercial rap and ethnicity. Such a mistake says a lot about the influence of globalization in the Netherlands, but also is evidence of the current significance of ethnicity in Dutch society. It is also evidence of the fact that identity as perceived by others is often fluid, changing to fit particular contexts, which are in turn shaped by outward issues. Thus, though Senna may perceive herself as "Dutch," she is often characterized as Moroccan, a detail that becomes important because of the dominant notions of Moroccan identity that are shaped by Dutch media, politicians, and

integrationist organizations. When such concepts remain uncontradicted, beliefs about ethnic and gender identities are further solidified.

Nevertheless, by refusing to project themselves as in opposition to male rappers, by physically occupying public space, and by imposing their individual styles, female rappers are transgressing many definitions, including what it means to be female and what it means to be Dutch.

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APPENDIX A

Interview guide from interviews with female rappers

1. **What is your full name, age and birthplace?**
2. Tell me about your background, your childhood, your home, your neighborhood, your family, your friends, etc. This is a large question, but what I most want in an answer is a description of the parts of your life that you feel are most significant. **What parts do you feel have most shaped your identity, as it is today? How would you describe your identity?** Please get into as much as detail as you feel comfortable sharing.
3. **Describe your first encounter with hip hop.** Tell me about how you began participating within the hip hop scene. How did you first connect with it? How is hip hop a tool for self-expression? Do you feel that it is political? Why or why not? Personal? Passionate? **Tell me how you would define hip hop.**
4. How would you describe the role of ethnicity or culture, class, religion, and gender (being male or being female) in hip hop?
5. Do you feel that your music empowers you? Why/why not? How?
6. What are the recurring themes in your music and lyrics? What do you hope people get out of your music? What message would you like to come across to listeners in your music?
7. Share some feedback you have received from audience members or listeners about your music or performance.
8. How often do you perform? How would you describe the various people who attend your shows?
9. Do you have another job in addition to performing and creating music?
10. What are your ambitions for the future?

APPENDIX B

Selections from hiphopinjesmoel.com survey answers

[HIPHOPINJESMOEL](#) >> [JUST SPIT](#)

[love hip hop?](#)

[NIEUW TOPIC REAGEER](#)

Pagina 1 van 1

[zhozhi11](#)

Do 27 Apr 2006 - 17:27 | **love hip hop?**

[QUOTE](#)

hi all,

i know this is a dutch board, so i am sorry i'm writing in english.

i am a writer from the U.S. currently living in amsterdam and writing about hip hop in the netherlands. i am interested in hearing the opinion of hip hop listeners here. if interested, please answer the below questions and send them to zhozhi11@yahoo.com or type your answers here.

thanks!

questions:

What is your name, age, sex, and birthplace/hometown?

Who are your favorite hip hop artists? Why?

In your own words, please define hip hop and describe your first experience with it.

[Derico](#)



Do 27 Apr 2006 - 18:11 | **Re: love hip hop?**

[QUOTE](#)

name: Derico

age: 19

gender: male

birth: Nijmegen

living in: Wijchen

Mos def, Kanye West, Opgezwolle, Jay-z, Nas

I see hiphop as a whole culture... and a hobby

First experience was my brother in law playing Nas i guess and Luniz- I got 5 on it on Mtv, Lyricist Lounge Show

A true master knows he's just another student.

[Paul Peters](#)



Do 27 Apr 2006 - 19:07 |

[QUOTE](#)

What is your name, age, sex, and birthplace/hometown?

Paul Peters, **35**, male, Nijmegen/Nijmegen

Who are your favorite hip hop artists? Why?

Ramm-Ell-Zee/Ghetto Vetts, Futura, Kase, PE, Shante, Biz Markie, Skinny Boys, Eric B and Rakim and Enge Mannen. Energy and inventive weirdness...

In your own words, please define hip hop and describe your first experience with it.

'It's the Pride that makes you Strong' and the hate/fun keeps it going...

and

By accident I ran over a girl with my cheap-ass (Kwantum) BMX that tried to beat up, what later was to become one of mij best friends and she, yes 'SHE' introduced us to 'rap-music' (Doug E. Fresh) and that friend an I were tired of drawing 'space battles' in our school book so we turned our efforts towards drawing 'graffities'...

P2 grown men acting like teenagers, we're raising mistakes

[Xwisit](#)

Do 27 Apr 2006 - 23:21 | **Re: love hip hop?**

[QUOTE](#)

What is your name, age, sex, and birthplace/hometown?

Johnny Stardust, 17, male, Eindhoven (E-Town), E-Town (Eindhoven)

Who are your favorite hip hop artists? Why?

Non-Phixion, Nas, Atmosphere, Sage Francis, Opgezwolle, Jiggy Djé,
Just Blaze, Dr. Dre, Jedi Mind Tricks, Army of the Pharaohs, Outerspace, Mobb Deep, Wu-Tang Clan

'Couse they keep it real 😊, They got energy, style, comprehensive rhymes, dope beats. Nas has intelligent lyrics, but Vinnie Paz from JMT and AOTP has a voice that no-one can compete against if it comes to rawness. Opgezwolle and Jiggy Djé are artists from holland, and in my opinion, their lyrics are the best I've ever heard. I could listen on for hours, like as if I drown in the music. Especially with Opgezwolle, you really get drawn into their world. With Jiggy it's more like his attitude and his style plus an amazing flow that makes him one of te best of holland.

In your own words, please define hip hop and describe your first experience with it.

Hiphop is The Music itself (Rap, beats and the DJ), B-Boying, graffiti and beatboxing. It's also chilling with friends and doin' things that you like, but on the hiphop way. That means on the way you want it, that's the freedom you have in hiphop. If you are a hiphopper, you're an artist already without being a rapper or graffiti artist or anything. You do things in life as you believe it's your way of doing it.

Via email:

Name: Ruys

Age: nearly 30

Sex: male

Hometown: Heerlen

A definition of hiphop???? Pfff. That's difficult. I think hiphop is 'a way of life' how cliché, but in a sense it is. Most people I know who are into rapmusic are easy to get along with. They got the same state of mind, however it may differ from person to person. If someone lives his hiphoplifestyle within the reality he breaths in, than it's ok. At the same time hiphop is so broad that it's hard to formulate one definition. It has become so large that one person could interpret it completely different than another.

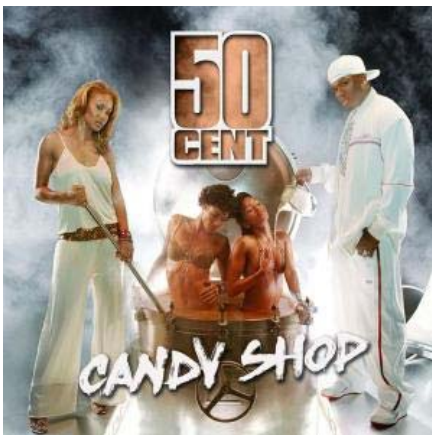
APPENDIX C
Pictures



Ali B. and the Queen



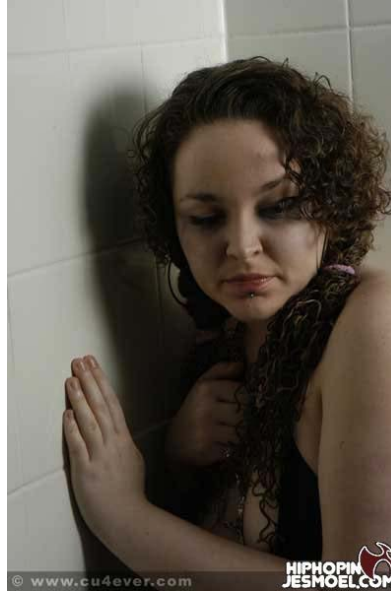
Single cover for Raymzter's "KutMorokkanen??!"



Single cover for 50 cent's "Candy Shop"



Senna



Jav'lin



Lady Di